

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

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DRAFT MINUTES **Executive Committee Conference Call** **Wednesday, August 29, 2007 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., e.s.t.**

Executive Committee Members Present: Martin Massengale, Chair; Marty Apple, Walter Armbruster, Carol Keiser

Executive Committee Members Absent: George Hoffman, Vice Chair, James Zuiches, David Thomassen, Daryl Lund, Mary Wagner

Others Present: Dr. Colien Heffernan, Administrator, CSREES, (Ex-officio)

Board Staff Participation: Joseph Dunn, Executive Director, NAREEE Advisory Board, Shirley Morgan-Jordan, Program Support Coordinator.



I. WELCOME AND UPDATE

Joseph Dunn called roll of the Executive Committee members.

Martin Massengale, Chair of the NAREEE Advisory Board, provided some introductory remarks and welcomed Executive Committee members and others on the call. Martin briefly reviewed the Specialty Crop meeting just held in Modesto, CA where some of the members of the Executive Committee were in attendance. He stated that Congressman Cardoza of California's 18th District attended part of that meeting and spoke for thirty minutes on subjects relevant to specialty crops (horticulture and organic farming). Martin then commented that the Almond Board had offered the Specialty Crop committee use of their facilities in the Double Tree hotel for the next morning. Although this offer was declined because other arrangements were already made, the Committee did accept a tour of the Almond Board's facilities. He also remarked that there were many excellent presentations at the Specialty Crops committee meeting, and that Tuesday's program which included a tour of several Specialty Crop farms and facilities and dinner at Mary Wagner's house was outstanding. All who participated in this program agreed. He concluded his comments by stating that there is a major problem looming in the specialty crop industry in the form of a labor crisis. After Dr. Massengale's remarks a lengthy discussion followed among all the Executive Committee members on status of the Research and Energy Titles in the House version of the farm

bill. Colien Heffernan presented the latest information she had regarding the Research Title and the possible reorganization of REE, and Joe Dunn reported on the latest information regarding the Energy Title. It was decided that all actions taken by the House could be offset by those taken in the Senate and thus any conclusions were speculative at this time.

II. Status of New Nominee's

Joe Dunn remarked that the office had received over 45 nominations by the July 30 deadline with at least two nominees for each category. Martin commented that nominee's chosen for seats on the Board for 2008 – 2011 need to be notified soon so they can begin planning for the October meeting. He asked that all legislation relating to the Board, including its Specialty Crop committee, be updated for distribution and review at the October meeting.

III. Update of REE Activities

Joe Dunn stated that REE's two interagency task forces which were initiated by Dr. Buchanan and are chaired by Joe, the "Agricultural Bioenergy Bioproducts Research Education and Extension" (ABBREE) working group and the Specialty Crop Initiative Implementation Team" (SCRIIPT) have been highly successful in helping REE plan future science and education in these areas. He stated that he has also asked these working groups to assist Dr. Buchanan in preparing responses to the NAREEE Advisory Board's recommendations, when applicable. For those recommendations that do not deal with bioenergy/bioproducts or specialty crops, Joe commented that Dr. Buchanan has agreed that a new group be formed, the "Board Action Response Team" (BRAT) to prepare the mission area's responses. Finally, Joe reported that REE will be hosting a workshop in Arlington VA. To help the Under Secretary plan for future bioenergy science and education initiatives should additional mandatory monies become available through the farm bill.

IV. Update of Program for the October Meeting

Both Daryl Lund, who co-chairs the Organic Agriculture working group, and Walt Armbruster who spoke for the Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group stated that their respective teams have had several planning session conference calls. The Organic Agriculture agenda was nearing completion however the agenda for the Rural Economic and Community Development focus session was lagging behind somewhat. Martin inquired from Walt how best to speed up the agenda planning for this group. Walt said he would talk to Jim Zuiches and Alton Thompson to encourage them to complete this task.

Marty Apple suggested Tim Frank had discussed this topic (rural economic development) quite well previously and perhaps he could write a white paper for us. Martin Massengale said that the focus is not going to be on Rural Development per se, but preservation and improvement of rural communities and the role of cooperative extension.

V. Planning for the October Meeting

Joe Dunn and Shirley Morgan reminded the Executive Committee that this fall's meeting will be held October 29 through the 31st at the Rhode Island Double Tree hotel in Washington DC. This meeting, as with all fall meetings of the Board, will begin with an orientation for new members

from 9:00 a.m. until noon on Monday, followed immediately by a meeting of the full Board starting with a working lunch on Monday. A draft agenda is currently being developed and will be finalized once input from the two work group agenda's are received. It is expected, however, that the meeting will adjourn no later than noon on Wednesday so people can schedule their departure in the early afternoon.

VI. Discussion of Strategic Planning and Future Directions of the Board.

Martin Massengale had requested that time be allowed at this Executive Committee meeting for its members to begin discussing a strategic plan and future directions for the Board. Martin asked Joe Dunn if he could comment on his ideas for future directions. Joe expressed two concerns, 1) that the budget is insufficient to continue to hold three meetings annually and support an office staff to accommodate all of the Board's activities and 2) that the Board needs a full time Executive Director and it might be best if that person be a government employee rather than a political appointee. Martin Massengale said the Board is better served if the Executive Director reports to the REE office rather than one of the REE agencies. He also expressed his confidence that when the Board is re-authorized in the next farm bill its budget will be increased from \$350,000 to \$500,000. Other discussion ensued among the Executive Committee members concerning the future role of the Board in advising the Secretary of Agriculture, the REE Under Secretary and certain members of Congress on matters of agricultural research, education, extension and economics. He congratulated the Board members on producing seven reports in the 2007 fiscal year, with many of those reports serving as the basis for new language in the Administration's, House and Senate versions of the farm bill. All agreed that the Board's role as advisor to the Department and Congress on these matters was critical and future direction should include measures to increase funding for research, extension, education and economic programs in the Department.

The meeting ran from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, reconvened at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday and adjourned at 9:00 a.m. Thursday, August 30, 2007.

MARTIN MASSENGALE
Chair

JOSEPH DUNN
Acting, Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____
Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director